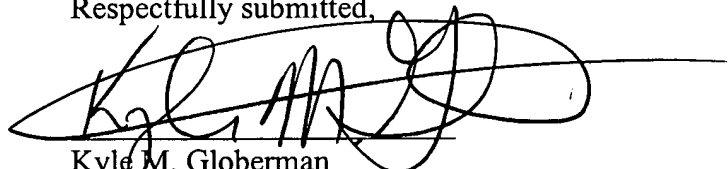


prior to Cathey's effective filing date, that the inventors worked diligently, in the United States, to the actual reduction to practice and, moreover, that actual reduction to practice, in the United States, occurred on December 6, 1996 prior to Cathey's issue date. Consequently, since Cathey has been removed as a reference against the claimed invention, a rejection based upon Cathey is rendered moot.

Based upon the above remarks and the enclosed Affidavits, claims 1 to 23 are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions which could place this application in even better form, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (404) 815-6140.

Respectfully submitted,



Kyle M. Globerman
Reg. No. 46,730

KILPATRICK STOCKTON LLP
Suite 2800, 1100 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30309-4530
(404) 815-6140